Losses Suffered by Khetri Copper Project

*148. SHRI PRAVATHANENI UPENDRA. Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Khetri Copper Project in Rajasthan is continuously running into losses;

(b) if so, the total accumulated losses suffered by the Khetri Copper Project since its installation; and

(c) the reasons for the continuing losses and whether Government have taken any measures to ensure that this important Plant gives better performance and shows profits?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI K. C. PANT): (a) to (c) The Khetri Copper Project (KCC) of Hindustan Copper Ltd. has been incurring losses since its inception except in 1984-85. The net cumulative loss suffered by KCC till 31.3.86 is Rs. 143.67 crores. The main reasons for losses incurred by KCC are:—

(i) Low grade of ore;

(ii) Increase in input costs; and

(iii) shortage and high cost of power.

When KCC was set-up in response to strategic requirements Govt. were aware of the low grade of ore and the likely economic non-viability of its operations.

The important steps taken by the company to improve the working of KCC are:—

(i) Modernisation of smelter and refinery;

(ii) Improvement in capacity utilisation; and

(iii) Phasing out of uneconomic mines and developing new ones.

Three-tier monitoring system for supply of food

*149. SHRIMATI KRISHNA KAUL: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to constitute a three-tier monitoring system to ensure proper and equitable supply of food stuff to check profiteering, and to process consumers' complaints; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI H. K. L. BHAGAT): (a) and (b) Apart from strengthening and streamlining the monitoring arrangements for public distribution system and impressing upon the States/Uts to enforce the existing anti-profiteering laws such as Essential Commodities Act, Prevention of Blackmarketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, etc., the Central Government has enacted a comprehensive consumer protection law, namely, the Consumer protection Act, 1986 to provide for better protection to the consumers. The Act seeks to provide simple, speedy and inexpensive redressal to consumers' grievances. This Act envisages setting up of a three tier quasi-judicial machinery at the district, State and national level. The Act applies to all goods and services unless specifically exempted by the Central Government. It covers public, private joint and cooperative sectors. The Act also provides for setting up of Consumer Protection Councils at the Centre and the States, whose main object shall be to promote and protect the rights of the consumers as enshrined in the Act.

National water Grid System

*151. SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recently received a suggestion from any

quarter for the launching of a national water grid system so that the problem of famine in vast areas of the country and of floods in other areas of the country might be handled; and

(b) if so, the action taken by Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) and (b) Proposals for linking the various river systems have been made from time to time and the broad techno-economic aspects of the proposals have been examined. Keeping in view the national perspective for water resources development outlined in 1980, studies with regard to interlinking of peninsular rivers have been taken up.

Suicide by Scientists

*152. SHRI LAL K. ADVANI:

SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a Senior Scientist of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, Shri K. K. Verma took poison in his laboratory on the 4th December, 1986; if so, the reasons therefor; and

(b) the names of the scientists who were working in various institutions and laboratories under his Ministry, who had committed suicide so far and the reasons of doing so, in each case?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI G. S. DHILLON): (a) Yes, Sir. A Senior Scientist of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (I.A.R.I.), Dr. K. K. Verma took a poisonous (carbofuran) insecticide, in his laboratory on the evening of 4th December, 1986. Immediately thereafter a Committee of three Senior Scientists was constituted by the Director, I.A.R.I. to ascertain the reasons for such a desperate act on the part of Dr. Verma. According to the findings of the Inquiry Committee, Dr. Verma is an old case of mental depression and has been under medical treatment since 1983 at Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital. On the morning of the day of this incident, Dr. Verma was administered electric shock therapy and he probably took this step under the influence of acute depression. Immediate medical aid was provided which saved his life.

(b) The names of the Scientists of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research who committed suicide and the reasons thereof are given below:—

1. Dr. S. S. Batra, Assistant Research Officer (Vety.) Southern Regional Station, National Dairy Research Institute, Bangalore, died on March 28, 1970. His dead body was found lying in the well of National Dairy Research Institute Campus in Bangalore. A diary was found in his pocket which contained a few addresses only. It could not be established whether it was a case of suicide.

2. Dr. V. H. Shah, Senior Agronomist and Associate Coordinator, All India Maize Improvement Project, Indian Agricultural Research Institute, committed suicide on May 5, 1972. The various allegations made by late Dr. Shah were examined by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research Inquiry Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. Gajendragadkar, Ex-Chief Justice of India. Dr. Shah's principal complaint that he had been overlooked by a Selection Committee of Indian Council of Agricultural Research was not found to be justified by the Committee which upheld the selection of Dr. Rajendra Prasad. The Second complaint related to the appointment of Dr. Rajat De as Head of the Division of Agronomy. The Committee concluded that the appointment of Dr. De as Head of Division of Agronomy was not properly made. Dr. Shah was not a candidate for this post and the